



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

Barbara Dancygier, The language of stories: A cognitive approach. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. x, 228. Hb. £63.

Citation for published version:

Cariola, LA 2013, 'Barbara Dancygier, The language of stories: A cognitive approach. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. x, 228. Hb. £63. A cognitive approach', *Language in Society*, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 593-594. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404513000742>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1017/S0047404513000742](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404513000742)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Language in Society

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



Book note

Cariola, L. A. (2013). Book note. The language of stories: A cognitive approach by Barbara Dancygier. *Language in Society*, 42, 593-594.

BARBARA DANCYGIER, *The language of stories: A cognitive approach*. New York, Cambridge University, 2012. Pp. x, 228. Hb. £63.00

Reviewed by LAURA A. CARIOLA
Department of Linguistics and English, Lancaster University
Lancaster, LA1 4YL, United Kingdom
l.cariola@lancaster.ac.uk

A recent trend in cognitive linguistics has encouraged a greater interest to study the relationship between language and cognition within the realm of literary studies. Out of this view, *The language of stories: A cognitive approach* investigates the cognitive linguistic processes that underpin and drive the construction and negotiation of meaning and interpretation in literary texts. By drawing on construction grammar and blending theory, the author proposes a new cognitive approach to the analysis of the language of narratives that systematically explores the dynamicity of blending between different levels of language expressions, ranging from sentence-level lexical and grammatical choices to text-wide structural strategies, in the construction of multi-levelled narrative spaces. The book is divided into eight chapters.

In Chapter 1 the author discusses theories and research as well as cultural and evolutionary perspectives that inform the cognitive and linguistic status of narrative meaning and comprehension, and thus provide a conceptual framework to the following discussion.

Chapter 2 outlines the function of blending in the cognitive construction of narratives. It conceptualizes narrative space as a container of independent textual

input elements that are selectively integrated and elaborated and thus prompt the construction of viewpoint and the emergence of a conceptually coherent story structure.

Chapter 3 focuses on the function of narratorship. In particular, the narrator's epistemic viewpoint is perceived as a composition of various micro-level phenomena that are located within the narrative space contribute to the emergence of the macro-level story structure. Chapter 4 explores the micro-level of viewpoint phenomena and the function of representational frames as well as the concept of viewpoint compression that moderate and drive the emergent story. Chapter 5 identifies the role of referential expression in the construction of story space and viewpoint, with a particular attention to the function of pronouns.

Chapter 6 discusses theatre discourses and how the theatre-specific objects as well as specific language choices embody the intentions and emotions of the characters, and thus contribute to a compressed story-blend. Chapter 7 outlines on various strategies of thought and speech presentation in literary text. Particular attention is given to the conceptualization of speech and thought as a low-level space and its relationship to higher-level viewpoint compression and story composition. Chapter 8 is the final chapter, and it represents a final summary of the discussions outlined in the previous chapters.

In conclusion, the book presents a stimulating and innovative contribution to the understanding of cognitive linguistics and its role in the meaning construction and interpretation of literary texts. Particularly the use of literary examples makes it straightforward to follow the author's analytic discussion. *The language of stories: A cognitive approach* is a very recommendable book for students and researchers, such

as linguists, cognitive scientist, and literary critics, who are interested in the intersection of cognitive linguistics and narratives.